



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 April 24, 2014

PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Program

Providing Navajo students with quality of life improvements and opportunities



On April 17, 2014, more than 100 Navajo college students were honored at Navajo Technical University and San Juan College.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly joined Patricia K. Collawn of PNM to honor the students. Collawn is chairman, president and chief executive officer of PNM.

Students received scholarships as part of the PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Program for careers in energy, construction, manufacturing and technology.

One such person was Sean Tohannie, a SJC student studying instrument and controls technology.

In a letter to PNM and the Navajo Nation, Tohannie stated, "Since I live in Arizona and San Juan College is in New Mexico, we had to commute to and from for a total of four hours. It took a lot of money and time out of our studying and homework. When we the extra money we were able to stay in motels for another day to catch up."

Tohannie was one of the 47 NTU and 77 SJC students in certificate, associate and bachelor degree programs to receive scholarships since 2013.

The initiative was created in 2013 by PNM's \$1 million five-year funding commitment. It is designed to prepare Navajos for jobs that are in demand and important to the Four Corners area and the Navajo Nation.

These jobs are in the energy, oil and gas, construction, information technology and manufacturing sectors.

Addressing students at NTU, President Shelly said, "Here on the Navajo Nation, our most important resource is our Navajo people. Our human resources are our heart and mind."

"To compete globally, we are creating a workforce to attract

"To compete globally, we are creating a workforce to attract business."

business. Our resources at home are you and your talent," he added.

In May 2014, 12 students will graduate from NTU and nine will graduate from SJC.

NTU's recent effort to offer a four-year degree brought in 15 PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Program participants for enrollment in information technology, engineering and environmental science programs.

"As we move forward as a people, we are making a future to provide for our families, how we re going to provide for our children and most importantly, how we are going to provide for our elderly," President Shelly said.



Top, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly spoke to students at Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint and San Juan College in Farmington on April 17, 2014. More than 100 Navajo college students were honored and received scholarships from the PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Program. Bottom, PNM is providing \$200,000 in scholarships for the next five years for careers in energy, construction, manufacturing and technology. (Photos by Michele Morris)

He said there are over 300,000 Navajos in the world and what sets us apart from Indian Country as the largest tribe in the U.S. is our drive, vision and thought that there's always something better out there.

"Everything rests on you," President Shelly said.

The training program is part of PNM's efforts to minimize economic impact related to the proposed 2017 closure of two units at the San Juan Generating Station near Farmington.

The closure is part of an agreement between, PNM, the Environmental Protection Agency and the New Mexico Environment Department that requires San Juan to comply with a federal regional haze rule.

The scholarship program is not funded by customer rates and provides \$200,000 over five years.

"Helping lay the foundation for a stronger New Mexico economy is important to PNM and all of us here," Collawn said. "Having a strong economic base empowers our communities.

"It allows individuals to provide for themselves and their families to improve their quality of life," she added.

NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy and SJC President Dr. Toni Pendergrass joined President Shelly and Collawn last week to honor Navajo students in Crownpoint and Farmington.

"Because of this partnership, students will have the opportunity to achieve the career goals in numerous disciplines," Pendergrass said.

From studying building trades and civil drafting to occupational safety and welding, she noted that the students are the future of business and the community.

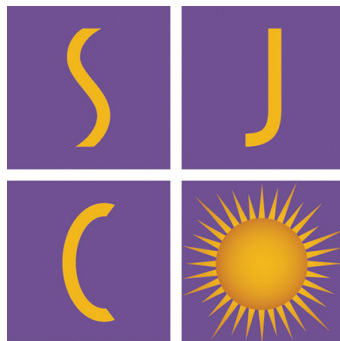
Through the PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Training Program, Navajo students can qualify for \$1,000 to \$2,000 in funding per semester for specific programs at NTU and SJC.

"Through public and private sector partnerships, we are able to enhance support for Navajo students enrolled in certificate, associate and bachelor degree programs," Guy said. "The program is not only contributing to the success of Navajo students, but also empowering our graduates to compete economically at home, nationally and globally."



Dr. Toni Pendergrass has been San Juan College President since July 2, 2012. Her extensive experience in the community college realm for almost 20 years has brought firsthand experience for growing community partnerships and economic development efforts at SJC. (Photo by Michele Morris)

-30-



The official academic stole for the PNM-Navajo Nation Workforce Development Program graduates at San Juan College was a meld of pendelton cloth and official seals from the participating institutions. (Photo by Michele Morris)